

## 2023-2024 COVID-19 Vaccine & Older Adults: What You Need to Know

### Older adults are at highest risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19

Older age remains the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes. Throughout the pandemic, older adults have experienced the highest hospitalization rates of any age group. During the Delta and Omicron periods, the proportion of adults 65 and older who were hospitalized increased compared to previous periods in the pandemic. [Data suggests](#) that 90% of COVID-19 hospitalizations during the most recent Omicron wave were among this group.

Over 1.1 million deaths [have been reported](#) in the U.S. from COVID-19, and most of these deaths are among those 65 and older. Notably, people 65 and older account for only 16% of the total U.S. population but have represented [75% of all COVID-19 deaths](#) to date. In October 2022, [9 out of 10 deaths](#) from the virus in our country were among those 65 and older.

### Only 4 in 10 older adults in the United States were considered up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in 2022-2023

For this upcoming season, most individuals will be [considered up to date on COVID-19 vaccination](#) if they have received just one 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 months after getting the last dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.

Only [38.7%](#) of North Dakotans 65 and older received a dose of the previously authorized bivalent COVID-19 vaccine. When looking specifically at [nursing home residents and staff](#) as of September 2023, over 70% of residents but **less than one quarter of nursing home health care staff** were up to date on COVID-19 vaccination in ND.

## Additional doses

The CDC recommends moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals to receive anywhere from 1 to 3 doses of updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. The number of doses recommended depends on the individual's vaccination history and vaccine manufacturer. After this initial series, the CDC allows this group to receive an additional 2023-2024 vaccine dose. Any additional doses beyond that may be administered, informed by clinical judgement from a healthcare provider and personal preference and circumstances. This recommendation applies to [moderately to severely immunocompromised](#) individuals only. **Healthy adults 65 years of age and older are not allowed to receive an additional dose at this time.** Individuals who have questions are recommended to contact their healthcare provider, local health department, or state health department.

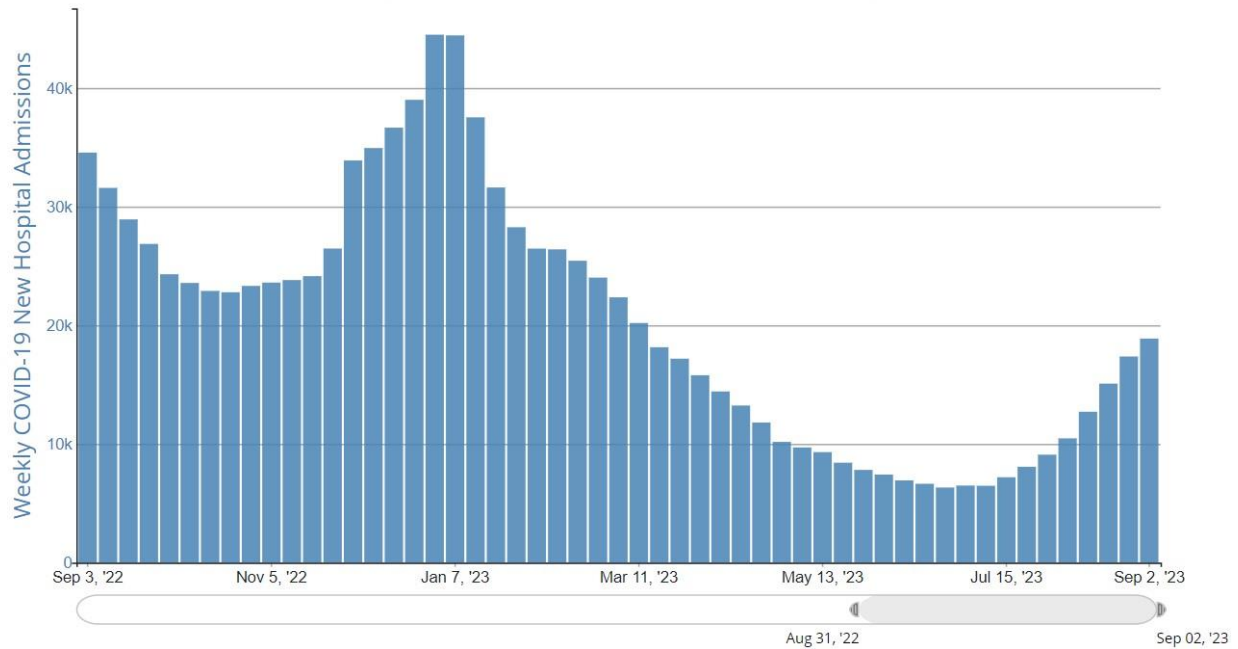
## Updated vaccine provides additional protection against COVID-19

The 2023-2024 vaccine provides protection against more prevalent variants. COVID-19 vaccines can help protect against severe COVID-19 outcomes, like hospitalization and death. However, as the virus changes and immunity naturally decreases over time, individuals may lose some of that protection. The best way to protect older adults from COVID-19 is to make sure they are up to date on COVID-19 vaccination.

Data from last season showed that the Bivalent COVID-19 vaccines were almost [60% effective](#) among children and adults at preventing emergency department and urgent care visits. Additionally, the bivalent booster was 65% effective at preventing hospitalizations within the first 6 months after vaccination. Furthermore, [data](#) shows that people who received the bivalent vaccine were 15 times less likely to die from COVID-19 compared to people who are not vaccinated.

Below is a graph from the [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#) comparing the rates of COVID-19 associated hospitalizations over the course of a year. Hospitalizations have decreased, but as the fall and winter season approaches, the trend for COVID-19 new hospital admissions appears to be increasing.

COVID-19 New Hospital Admissions, by Week, in The United States, Reported to CDC



People 65 and older have consistently accounted for a larger share of COVID-19 associated hospitalization and deaths throughout the entire pandemic. While high initial vaccination rates among this age group have given hope and [saved many lives](#), it is very important for older adults to stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccination to prevent severe COVID-19 outcomes. Currently available [vaccines](#) and [treatments](#) are our best fight against this virus, particularly among the older population.